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was one by Dr. AITKEN, taken on September 20th. Another observation on September 21st by AITKEN, and one by VAN BIESBROECK at the Yerkes Observatory, on September 18th, arrived the following day. On the basis of these three observations a preliminary orbit was computed by Mr. ALTER and the undersigned. (H. C. O. Bulletin 590). Four more observations have been received to date: two by AITKEN on September 22d and 23d respectively, and two by VAN BIESBROECK on September 20th and 21st respectively. AITKEN's observations of September 20th, 21st and 23d were used in the calculation of new elements, which are published with an ephemeris in Lick Observatory Bulletin, Number 273.

The comet passed within 41,000,000 miles of the Sun on October 13, 1915. Its nearest approach to the Earth occurred on October 2d, when it was approximately 123,000,000 miles away. It changed from a morning to an evening object on October 6, 1915. The inclination of its orbit plane to the ecliptic is 54°. The longitude of its ascending node is 78°. This places the path of this comet in a plane nearly coincident with that of comet *a* 1915, discovered by MELLISH on February 10, 1915.

Owing to its rapidly increasing southern declination, and nearness to the Sun, it is doubtful if any more observations of the comet can be secured in the northern hemisphere. Lick Observatory Bulletin, Number 273, gives its position to December 30, 1915. Its declination on that date is — 49°, and in right ascension it is, at that time, only one hour east of the Sun. Its distance from the Earth on December 30, 1915, will be 239,000,000 miles.

S. EINARSSON.

STUDENTS' OBSERVATORY,
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA,
November 3, 1915.

NOTE ON COMET *d* 1915 (MELLISH).

A telegram was received at the Lick Observatory on September 19, 1915, from Director FROST of the Yerkes Observatory requesting observations of a new comet discovered by Mr. JOHN E. MELLISH. The comet was found that night with the 12-inch telescope. It was a small object, nearly round, about 3′ in diameter, with a well marked central condensation, hardly sharp enuf to be called a nucleus. It was low in the eastern sky just before dawn, and its motion was found to be to the south and east, towards the Sun. Measures were not difficult on this night nor on September 20th, for the observing conditions were good. On the two following nights, September 21st and 22d, wind and poor seeing, and moonlight made the comet exceedingly faint. On September 21st no star was available for direct measures, and the approach of dawn permitted only four measures in each co-ordinate, by transits, from a star nearly 2^m distant. This observation should be given small weight in the definitive orbit discussion. Strong moonlight and the comet's rapid approach to the Sun prevented further measures. It was looked for in the western sky after sunset in October, but without success.

R. G. AITKEN.

November 8, 1915.

A BRILLIANT AURORA.

In the early morning hours of June 17, 1915 (civil time), a beautiful aurora was seen from Mount Hamilton. It was first noticed shortly after midnight and became most brilliant at about 2:30 (P. S. T.). The illumination extended from 15° to 30° west of north to 80° or 90° east of north. The streamers reached half way to the zenith,—up into the Milky Way about *Cassiopeia*. Few of the streamers were as long as 60°, and the forms were changing constantly. There was a distinct crimson color in the east,—just over Copernicus Peak as seen from near the 12-inch dome.

An aurora in California,—at least in the region around San Francisco Bay,—is a very rare phenomenon, and I have no recollection of ever having seen one in this region before.

S. D. TOWNLEY.

OBSERVED ROTATIONS OF PLANETARY NEBULÆ.

An observation of planetary nebula NGC 7009, R. A. 20^h 58^m, Decl. — 11° 48′, secured with the three-prism Mills spectrograph on the evening of November 14, 1915, showed us,